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Culinary Entertainment, Creative Labor and the Re-Territorialization of White Masculinity

Abstract

This article explores popular cultural themes of masculinity and mobility in the context of post-race and "end of men" discourses. Our attention is focused on sites of everyday culture, taking note of the tropes by which white male authority is fantastically recuperated through culinary entertainment. We read films such as Chef and television reality series such as Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives as sites of a re-terrorialization of white masculinity, exploring the nostalgic resonance of the road-trip and fantasies of mobility and plenty in a social/cultural context of privation and inequality.

Keywords: masculinity, mobility, culinary enterainment, post-race, inequality

In her account of the "post-racial mystique," Catherine R. Squires observes that "the idea of racial innocence is reinforced in contemporary media, which suggest that there really is no more work to be done by the everyday citizen to reduce inequalities."[1] Clearly, the rhetoric of a post-racial US—prominent during Barack Obama's presidency—obscured as much as it revealed. Serving to mark change, or the passing of time at least, it nevertheless remains dangerously ahistorical. Comparable ahistorical markers are evident in twenty-first century assertions that in one way or another, Western cultures have seen the "End of Men." What is striking when we couple the omissions of post-racial, end-of-men America is an emphasis on white masculinity as a cultural (and crucially economic) site of loss. This received idea is supported by a sense that white men's "franchise on opportunity in the United States has putatively been revoked."[2] The marshalling of racism and xenophobia by the United States government as well as political figures across Western and Eastern Europe, has thrived on

this sense of lost authority. Neither successive scandals regarding the sexually exploitative behaviour of elite men nor successive instances of violence wielded against people of colour seem to have diminished the strength of this narrative as a mainstay of popular cultural texts.

In response to the perception of lost authority, numerous post-recessionary popular texts work to address and symbolically redress/recuperate white masculinity, insisting on the mobility and agency of white men who are seen to navigate new territories both geographical and emotional. In this article we seek to explore some of the principle tropes through which this re-territorialisation takes place, foregrounding what is at stake with respect to the mediation of gendered and racial hierarchies at work in male-fronted, food-centred film and television. Emphasising the adaptive and entrepreneurial endeavours necessary to shore up white male authority, culinary fictions are distinctive in their insistence on not just willing but joyful labour. Our attention here is focused on sites of everyday culture, taking note of the tropes by which white male authority is fantastically recuperated through culinary entertainment. Culinary entertainment is marked by a distinction between mobile male chefs and experts in contrast to female hosts who typically remain fixed in a studio locale or are emphatically associated with a romanticized localism (The Food Network's Barefoot Contessa, The Pioneer Woman, Giada at Home). In these ways not only do the female-fronted formats tend to emphasize economic privilege but they also play off a concept of safety and security associated with the known environments of domesticity.

Writing in a 2010 Atlantic article and subsequently in a 2012 book The End of Men: And the Rise of Women journalist Hanna Rosin formulated the concept of "the end of men" to pinpoint male disenfranchisement; the ensuing cultural drama that took hold around the term explicitly illustrated its perceived relevance and at a more implicit level its applicability nearly exclusively to white men. In such ways narratives of loss and disenfranchisement work—perhaps perversely—to reinforce entrenched inequalities of US society. As we argue

elsewhere, recession culture typically foregrounds and exacerbates social and economic inequalities, divisions that are in the US complexly bound up with the histories of race and class.[3] Moreover, geographies of region and of migration/immigration are intimately involved in popular understandings of work and unemployment, recession and labor. Thus the media texts we consider here deploy distilled representations of US cities—New Orleans, Miami, Los Angeles—and regions which speak in potentially complex ways to race and ethnicity.

Post-recessionary accounts of crisis masculinity have been notably updated through the work of Princeton economists Anne Case and Angus Deaton whose 2015 study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States created a sensation for its discovery of a dramatic rise in US midlife white mortality. Strongly associated with drug and alcohol abuse, physical and emotional pain and its management and suicide, this escalation reversed decades of lengthening life expectancy and as the authors note "those with less education saw the most marked increases."[4] While Deaton and Case's study found that the rise in mortality was associated with both and men and women, it nevertheless helped to push forward, lock in place and give quantitative shape and substance to the notion that white US men are suffering. In a 2017 follow-up study the two researchers confirmed the continuation of the developments they had previously mapped and noted a geographical component to their data which illustrated a pronounced urban/rural divide in which "white mortality rates fell in the biggest cities, were constant in big-city suburbs and rose in all other areas."[5]

Recent data suggests that deep-seated historical investments in relocation as aspiration within US culture are beginning to be overturned. In a striking account of the death of the American "boomtown" Emily Badger cites economists Kyle Herkenhoff, Lee Ohanian and Edward Prescott who observe the connection between previous cycles of economic growth in the US and an "enormous reallocation of population."[6] More lately in Badger's account US

migration is driven less by a sense of hopefulness about economic prospects and more by a desire on the part of individuals and families to reduce living costs. This telling shift bespeaks a key ideological change in perceptions of American opportunity and related mobilities. A 2017 New York Times article detailing mega-retailer Walmart's practice of making many of its parking lots available for those who sleep in their cars and RVs while traveling in pursuit of seasonal and part-time work similarly points up new configurations of the fraught relationship between precarious work and mobility in the post-recession US.[7] Among their other functions the texts we are concerned here with actively manage fears of economically coerced mobility in a contracting economy.

The careful management of locale in culinary texts is ideologically sourced in an Intensification of regional differences tied to deepening inequality. The long term cultural and psychological consequences of privatisation, out-sourcing and the practice of an increasingly unapologetic and naked crony capitalism – powerfully symbolized in the election of Donald J. Trump – are, we argue, acknowledged and managed in diverse genres of contemporary media. This includes platforms such as YouTube which showcase the vulnerable customer-citizen in myriad sites notably in airports and on airlines. A dramatic instance of the corporate abuse of the "customer" was evident in the case of Dr. David Dao, who was violently "re-accommodated" by United Airlines in April, 2017 when he refused to give up the seat he had paid for to make space on the aircraft for United personnel to travel. Viral videos such as the one of Dao being dragged off an airplane, by security personnel exert pressure on what is otherwise a fairly stable emergent formula of customer antagonism as entertainment. A more conventional example can be found in the Late Night with Jimmy Fallon segment "Bad Yelp Reviews" in which the host and a guest offer dramatic readings from disgruntled customers' Yelp complaints and the often vitriolic responses from business representatives. Against this context of commercial exploitation and disdain for the customer,

culinary entertainment foregrounds the care of expert labor. The preparation, pleasure in and consumption of food – mediated by the culinary expertise of white male characters – presents a spectacle of plenty and an abundance of goods and celebrates consumption as authentic, patriotic and post-racial.

For Tanya Ann Kennedy "post-discourses act as a structuring power, creating communities of affect that deny, repress and obstruct our ability to transform the economic and social injustices that organize our cultural and political institutions, our ways of thinking and our practices."[8] Both popular culture and political rhetoric tend towards essentialist formulations in addressing inequalities of opportunity and reward, while the magical erasures of history performed by post-racial discourse are secured by figures notably embodying individualism and choice. Here high-achieving individuals with privileged access to markets and cultural capital serve as evidence of the permeability of those very barriers to advancement which are simultaneously acknowledged and located in a past that is called into being via the designation post-race. Although a number of accounts of recessionary America take note of the disproportionate impact of cutbacks on African-American men, the "End of Men" formulation has relatively little to say on questions of race. Indeed, such accounts manifest an official race blindness while obliquely relying on race as a spectre, a perspective which seems relevant primarily as a lesson for whites. Rosin draws out a telling comparison: "The whole county's future could look much as the present does for many lower-class African-Americans: The mothers pull themselves up, but the men don't follow. First-generation college-educated white women may join their black counterparts in a new kind of middle class, where marriage is increasingly rare."[9] Here and elsewhere in her book an argument is played out that the consequences for white women of their access to education and employment is an increasing estrangement from the cultural needs of (white) men. Black women serve in such accounts not as figures of concern in their own right, but as witness and

warning of social changes that are understood as both gendered and post-racial. A critical goal for us here is to further racialize the "End of Men" trope as cultural explanation for the diffuse but deeply-felt economic and cultural losses associated with early twenty-first century US male citizenship.

Mainstream media representations display a decided preference for middle-class focalizations of post-race, postfeminist positionality. As Roopali Mukherjee notes "the ideology of post-race. . .leaves poor people of every race to fend for themselves within the governing logics of enterprise culture."[10] The compatibility of post-race formulations with neoliberal economic and social roles has been observed by a number of critics among them Squires who writes that "post-racial discourses resonate with neoliberal discourses because of their shared investment in individual-level analysis and concern with individual freedoms."[11] Here, we consider how post-race discourses renew the crisis of white masculinity amidst the fallout of the "Great Recession." At a time when more and more white American men are settling into patterns of permanent unemployment or underemployment, working from home and undertaking contingent and contract labor modes historically more characteristic of women and racial minorities, popular culture forms seek to assuage these experiences of displacement, dislocation and domesticity. They do so in part by thematizing mobility as code for resilience, giving men symbolic "new territories" to conquer and consume.

The mobility of white men contrasts markedly with the figuring of communities of color and particularly African-American males as restive, policed populations associated with urban malaise and economic and cultural stagnation. Recent flashpoint cases in Missouri, Florida and Texas have foregrounded either ghetto spaces as sites of stasis and restrictive surveillance or the hazards for young black men (and indeed women) who assert mobility. Questions of mobility are further racially charged in relation to the long history of exclusionary racial zoning in the US. The 2005 landmark event of Hurricane Katrina notably

thematized a racialized tension between mobility and stasis in American life as more affluent segments of the New Orleans population evacuated before the storm while a largely black underclass without resources to leave experienced disproportionate levels of suffering and death. A key frame around our observations about white masculinity and mobility here is the concentration of recent cases in which black motorists and pedestrians have been harassed, physically assaulted and/or shot by police officers. If conversations about these events still tend heavily toward (convoluted) attributions of blame to black victims of such behavior, equally frequent mass killings by white males are given a "cultural pass," seemingly understood as an unavoidable byproduct of the contemporary American lifestyle and going studiously unread in racial terms.

Male mobility is a key thematic in the entertainment texts we consider here, both in terms of the freedom to occupy public space and in the movement across—and ability to appropriate and repurpose—culinary modes and traditions. Our analysis responds to a proliferating cultural fear that large swathes of the United States are becoming inhospitable to the American Dream of prosperity for white males. These fears are being articulated most strikingly in a set of best-selling books that includes scholarly and popular accounts including Nancy Isenberg's White Trash: The 400-Year History of Class in America, Arlie Russell Hochschild's Strangers in their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right, Joan C. Williams' White Working Class: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America and particularly J.D. Vance's Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family in Culture in Crisis.[12] The latter, a book-selling phenomenon in 2016-2017, offers an account of the triumphant self-making of a white man born into Appalachian poverty who perseveres to become an Ivy League-educated lawyer despite structural disadvantages that the book consistently re-codes as personal. In the recent popular culture fixation on white regional stasis and economic stagnation, focus is placed on the rural white underclass and social problems such as opioid

addiction, multi-generational unemployment and the social devastation of big box store capitalism. Public policy scholar Justin Gest situates the new white underclass in what he calls "post-traumatic" cities "that have experienced economic, social and political collapse."[13] We show here the culinary male in Hollywood film and reality television operates to reassure that male entrepreneurial energies still flourish in both "off the beaten path" locales and hip cities**.**

The new de-territorialized white man whose work cannot guarantee place or position stands at the heart of the cultural texts we are concerned with here. We see food as a particularly compelling site of the new gendered enterprise culture, showing how popular culture presents white men as being especially suited to represent a form of productive consumption that is deemed authentic in part through its post-racial celebration and appropriation of ethnic cuisine, in part though an insistence on (white) masculine labor. In this regard, established post-recession idealizations of female entrepreneurialism highlighting consumption as an aspirational gateway to production and self-actualization (for female bloggers and vloggers, coupon-clippers, etc.) in an era of dramatically contracted economic opportunity are seemingly being re-gendered. In the first part of the article we explore culinary expertise and fantasies of labour as recuperation through the film Chef (Jon Favreau, 2014). The following section focuses on the uptick in male-centered food television. Our analysis considers themes of male mobility, salvage and thrift through reference to a range of media texts and their associated celebrity personae that showcase adaptive male entrepreneurialism.

The "Road" as Masculine Recuperative Space White male mobility is thematically at the heart of Chef wherein recently unemployed chef Carl Casper (Favreau) procures a foodtruck and together with his ethnic buddy Martin (John Leguiziamo) and young son Percy

undertakes a cross-country tour of "soulful" lifestyle meccas like New Orleans and Austin customizing his menu as he goes to cater to local specialties and food tastes.[14] Staging carniverousness as male recovery, the film must elide the health consequences of a diet of Cubano sandwiches, beignets and barbecue while relying on its star's overweight body as a sign of "authenticity." The film suggests that restorative low-level commerce, trade in the "favor economy," and technological prowess are key to re-building masculinity, addressing time scarcity dilemmas to do with parenting and re-securing the bonds of maleness. Complicating matters is the fact that Chef's need to dislodge Carl from his professional position at a successful restaurant early in the film strongly suggests that status quo capitalism is irrational (and deleterious to masculinity). The casting of Dustin Hoffman as the restaurant's owner further speaks to this since long ago (as The Graduate's Benjamin Braddock) Hoffman discovered the impasses of the US economic/ideological system. Meanwhile, a denouement in which Carl's entrepreneurialism leads to a re-connection with ex-wife Inez (Sofia Vergara), and a re-making of the (racially blended) family reuniting Carl with son Percy is both narratively unsurprising and critical to the film's racial operations and need to alleviate its fears for the fate of white men under conditions of precarity.

One way to understand films such as Chef is as part of a cinema of male anxiety that has flourished in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. In Masculinity and Male Performance: Male Angst in Contemporary American Cinema (2011) Donna Peberdy generates a theorization of masculinity that attempts to shift away from a pervasive and rather generalised discourse of crisis to a performance of angst. She writes of an "image of instability that is projected and portrayed, for the most part by movie-made men and, to a lesser extent, by male icons and public figures in the mass media and politics."[15] Representations of the sort she identifies are contextualized by a broad shift detailed by Hamilton Carroll in which white masculinity is transformed "from the universal into the

particular, whereby the particular becomes a location from which privilege can be recouped."[16] In these films crises of male intimacy tend to be co-located with anxieties about work. They span comedic and dramatic modes but continuously highlight a middle-class white man whose maturity, capacity for intimacy and place in the world are represented as precarious.[17] Some of the biggest Hollywood hits of recent years (and some commercial failures too) fall into this category including Forgetting Sarah Marshall, the Ted franchise, The Five-Year Engagement and Jeff Who Lives at Home.[18]

An earlier, highly significant precursor to Chef is James. L. Brooks' 2004 Spanglish, a torturous melodrama in which Chef John Clasky (Adam Sandler) becomes increasingly estranged from his bourgeois wife (Tea Leoni) as he falls in love with the family's Latina housekeeper (Paz Vega). Spanglish's extraordinary distaste for Deborah Clasky and level of condemnation for her unbalances the film and is so vituperative that critics reviewing it speculated that perhaps Brooks' recent divorce had overwhelmed his creative judgment. Chef removes the figures of the white woman as impediment to a white man's culinary creativity and self-actualization, replacing her with a Latina played by an actress well-known for her role as symbol of ethnic vivacity and multicultural update in the stock white family.[19] In her account of Vergara's role as Gloria on hit sitcom Modern Family Isabel Molina-Guzmán notes that the show exemplifies postracial discourse in its ability to "overlook" social inequalities, albeit that such "Latina visibility in the context of broader cultural invisibly presents opportunities to create ruptures in the dominant discourse about gender and ethnicity."[20] This relationship between the erasure of inequality and the commodification of ethnicity is thus central to the functioning of postrace discourse within media culture.

As Mary Beltrán has established, postracial fantasies of mobility are particularly available to white male protagonists and they have been showcased in some of Hollywood's most durable franchise formulas such as The Fast and The Furious.[21] While leisurely in its

pace, Chef takes this central trope of mobility within an ethnically diverse US as central to its restorative journey. It thus re-circulates elements of the road movie genre in an effort to quash "End of Men" anxieties and in so doing participates in a long tradition by which the "roadmovie provides a ready space for exploration of the tensions and crises of the historical moment during which it is produced."[22] Accordingly, salient iconographies of the road and the car factor to a significant extent in the texts we discuss here. Carl's rehabilitation of a broken-down truck in Chef and the vintage Camaro used by host Guy Fieri to tour restaurants in Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives both work to couple culinary and automotive nostalgia, notably conjuring authority via the mastery of technique and equipment.

Culinary travelogues of this kind are consistent in their commitment to projecting what Jonathan Leer and Katrina Medgarrd Kjaer term "ideas of authenticity on territories, foods and people."[23] In the US context, we argue, such discourses of authentic location and consumption operate as forums for the re-consolidation of white masculinity. Connoisseurship serves as compensation for lost cultural capital; as with the television formats we will go on to consider, culinary films centralise men who appreciate and validate the pleasures of food. Tellingly their connoisseurship is attached to realms of low status and the domestic – as for example, diner cooking – evoking the authenticity and meaning of food tradition. As suggested in Figure 1, Chef trades heavily in ethnic discourses of authenticity which are brought into play via metaphors of labor and consumption; not only does the film manifest an awareness of social fears about male economic irrelevance that concentrate on midlife men, but it also makes an appeal to bedrock notions of the white man's "honest labor" in the new enterprise culture. That honesty is infused with tropes of professional pride as evidenced in a scene in which Carl tutors his son in the requirement for consistent quality; Percy's novice suggestion that they serve a customer a burnt sandwich provides the premise

for a discussion of the ethics of service culture and a point of access into nostalgic registers which the film never lingers in but nevertheless activates. [Insert Figure 1 here]

Modes of transport and routes taken are heavy with symbolism in US culture. Carl may travel from his home in California to Miami by plane with ex-wife Inez and son Percy, but his return via road—accompanied by Percy and chef buddy Martin—stages a recovery of authority for him. In establishing his catering truck as a viable business Carl performs entrepreneurial success through the course of the narrative, suggesting a fantasized model for the reinvigoration of the US economy. Making things and selling them directly to customers is figured as feelgood, authentic business. Yet the film also signals its own sleight of hand since it is clear that in Chef's ideologically restorative version of the road movie Carl's journey is effectively overseen and managed by Inez; nurturing her man-boy ex-husband, it is her personal and business contacts, as well as her warm encouragement, that enables the journey to happen at all. Strikingly, although her exact occupation is never clarified, Inez seems to work in some type of Latino-oriented aspect of the entertainment/event planning industry (we hear her speak Spanish in relation to her work).[24] Thus, she is presented as operating in a space that commodifies images and emphasizes self-branding, the kind of post-recession work which is typically feminized in media coverage. Moreover, Chef suggests that Latino identity capital has become gainful; Inez is presented as ethnically grounded and secure while Carl's whiteness requires re-stabilization and re-definition. Inez's more or less explicit engineering of Carl's re-masculinizing journey suggests that she is deploying skills honed in her industry to rehabilitate him. It also, obliquely perhaps, alludes to the extent to which Carl's recovery from alienated labor is achieved via forms of expertise he does not possess—communications and social media—and in which his ex-wife and young son are proficient. The nostalgia for American productivity, for making things, so evident in Chef is ultimately inseperable from the branding of things.

Notably, it is through Inez and Percy's efforts that Carl learns to reconcile himself to what Jacob Silverman identifies as "the values and practices of today's social media – speed, radical transparency, confessionalism, exhibitionism, prideful consumerism, and, above all, a relentless positivity."[25] Percy's talent for social media enables his father's professional transformation while it is Carl's corresponding incompetence as a novice Twitter user that produces his public humiliation. In return Percy is both tutored in culinary skills and values and has the time with Carl that he has craved. The film suggests the alienation from family that attends professional work cultures and service cultures alike. The central theme of Carl's reconnection with his son refracts and inflects the themes developed through the rebellion from Dustin Hoffman's arrogant restaurant owner Riva which sets the narrative in motion.

While as we've argued above, Carl relies on Percy and Inez's facility with social media and communications more generally, he himself remains reassuringly incompetent in these terrains, asserting himself via the mastery of geography and cuisine. Carl's turning away in horror from an opportunity, proffered by Inez's publicist, to appear on reality cooking show *Hell's Kitchen* suggests that the tropes of authenticity and culinary performance embodied through the film's overweight hero are opposed to the disembodied sites of media culture. Indeed Carl's response to the suggestion that he mobilize his growing Twitter following as an opportunity for product placement or leverage the popularity of cell phone footage of his angry outburst into an appearance on a reality show is precisely to insist on the authentic reality of his labor ("I'm a real chef") and to reject the implication of low status cultural location he associates with the genre (tellingly Carl invokes the figure of white trash reality child star Honey Boo Boo). In this way, the film reinforces a broader cultural link between reality genres and the crass, female "sold-outness" associated with franchises including Here Comes Honey Boo Boo, Keeping Up with the Kardashians and The Real Housewives. What is pointed up here is the growing importance of what Jane Feuer has

identified as “a taste hierarchy within reality TV,” one which is predicated in part on the “feminine” triviality of series such as those noted above and the “masculine” utility and authenticity of series such as those we discuss later in this piece.[26]

Chef depicts the food industry as a sector which exploits and rewards, but registers the subservient norms of the service industry as a blow to masculinity and takes note of the ways in which discourses of civility map onto gendered and racialized norms as to appropriate behavior. How do we as audiences understand the rudeness of the food critic, the anger of Chef in terms of the social, professional and digital spaces occupied by white men? In what way is it possible to make the anger of black men and women legible in cinema – would it play as comedy as Favreau’s film does? What is overlooked in this process? Undoubtedly the metaphors of mobility—cultural and geographic—evoked by these media texts are premised on whiteness. In an evocative op-ed writer Roxane Gay explores the case of Sandra Bland, a black motorist seemingly entrapped in July, 2015 by a white police officer and harassed and arrested by him who committed suicide in her jail cell, pointing to the quotidian perils of “driving while black,” and remarking that “Law enforcement officers see only the color of my skin, and in the color of my skin they see criminality, deviance, a lack of humanity.”[27] We may contrast the vulnerability of mobility suggested here with a small but significant comic scene in Chef in which the food truck inadvertently opens for business in the wrong spot and a police officer appears, the situation being quickly defused rather than escalated. Recognizing Carl as the ‘angry chef’ made notorious via social media, the officer asks that they pose for pictures together. Carl’s anger ironically confers upon him a celebrity that smooths rather than complicates his relation to officialdom. This moment of neutralized confrontation reassures viewers that the universe works in favor of men like Carl. Not only that, the ‘confrontation’ with authority is captured by media-savvy Percy who employs it as an opportunity for further promotion. As shown in Figure 2, Chef employs split-screen

techniques to showcase a playful image of Carl and the cop as incorporated in Percy's clever use of social media and, on the right of the frame, the open road. [Insert Figure 2 here].

Taking the crisis of white masculinity for granted, the nature of the set-up in Chef suggests that managing male anger is an important, if sublimated, narrative goal. Carl channels an anger related to perceptions of obsolescence into his love of food but economic changes in the food industry are unmaking this formerly productive relation as the film begins. If recession culture displays white male anxiety over the passing of a productive economy, films such as Chef stage culinary labor as authentic and conceive production to be as important as consumption. The widespread and increasing loss of jobs to automation provides a context for a loving emphasis on the skilled preparation and aesthetic presentation of food. Carl's restoration of the food truck evidently engages the film's key thematics of authentic labor, nostalgia and rehabilitation.[28] His work in restoring it – a lengthy process over which the film lingers – resembles the salvage operations foregrounded in a spate of recent tv series that suggest contemporary masculinity must raid and refurbish earlier iconographies and repertoires of economic productivity. In this regard the film resembles television series we will discuss in the next section that feature vintage car-driving men and salvage operations carried out in declining American cities and towns. While working lives have been transformed by machinery, whether by improving processes or eradicating jobs (sometimes both), the mobility featured in these texts signals mastery of mechanization, rather than being subject to it.

As we have argued, Carl's affective re-positioning may be seen to be orchestrated by his Latina ex-wife and their son Percy. Transported by plane to Miami in order to serve as "nanny" to his son while Inez works, Carl's situation suggests a familiar "End of Men" narrative by which the economically under-achieving father is displaced by a professional woman. He must reluctantly accept a favor from his ex-wife's ex-husband who provides the

battered food truck that is the vehicle by which Carl will get back to basics, and find out if he has anything left to say through his food. Though Inez is scripted as a high-achieving professional woman her evident loyalty and attraction to Carl as well as the strength of her Latina identity distances her from more canonical postfeminist types. Indeed she orchestrates the Miami visit as a professional opportunity for her ex-husband. Following the family's enthusiastic viewing of Inez's father's performance in a Little Havana club Carl enthuses over a "real" Cubano sandwich; it is when Inez compliments Carl's cooking in response ("yours are way better") that she wins him over to the idea of the foodtruck.

To conclude this section we make brief mention of another mobility-minded male-centered cinematic culinary narrative, Burnt (2015). A psychological drama about a chef seeking to re-build his career after a destructive period of addiction, the film stars Bradley Cooper as Adam Jones, a man whose global cosmopolitanism is a marked feature. An American, Adam had previously attained two Michelin stars cooking in Paris but when his life implodes after drug-fueled rampages and ego-driven competitiveness with his rivals, he sentences himself to shucking one million oysters in New Orleans as a kind of atonement. As in Chef where New Orleans functions as a site for the white protagonist to fortify his sense of authenticity, Burnt's protagonist is consistently represented as being able to traverse a range of culinary environments from the modest to the exclusive. In London where he goes to re-build his career, we see him visit small shops and food trucks to taste their wares. Adam's culinary populism is reinforced when he tells sous-chef Helene (Sienna Miller) that they are alike in that all they both "wanna do is just fry some fucking fish." As in Chef it is strongly suggested that the talented white male can only be redeemed when he creates a link to community, albeit without relinquishing his mobility. Here the male redemption plot is signalled in a conclusion where Adam joins his team in the kitchen for a "family meal" when on previous occasions he had held himself apart.

Male Culinary Performativity, Midlife Hipsterism and Post-Racial Culture June Deery aptly observes that "one of reality television's strongest claims to realism is its representation of the increasingly commercialized nature of everyday life in societies that produce this programming."[29] The form's devotion to workplaces, shopping, makeovers, entrepreneurialism, and especially building personal and family brands, amply attests to its high degree of investment in the personal as commercial. The concern with livelihoods under threat and the need for personal economic resourcefulness has unsurprisingly emerged as a focus of concern in the genre after the financial crisis and Christopher Lockett was among the first to direct scholarly attention to the proliferation of "working men" reality television series in the recession.[30] He contends that "What is most interesting about this relatively small but striking subsection of reality television, which principally finds a home on such networks as Discovery and OLN, is its idealization of working-class labor at a time when blue-collar workers as such have effectively disappeared from the cultural imaginary."[31] In a similar vein, Diane Negra has observed that "spectacles of (largely white) working class enterprise function as a form of closely controlled ideological engagement with the exhaustion of aspirationalism and stressed status of economic mythologies."[32] Series like Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives and the Travel Channel's recently debuted Man Finds Food (2015--)[33] which joins stereotypical male "explorer" energies with consumer privilege and "insiderness" by having its host Adam Richman travel to food meccas to uncover "secret" menus and food items, fit into this genealogy, if not necessarily in straightforward ways. While blue-collar reality tv series concerned with labor often specifically address the vicissitudes of economic exigency after the global financial crash, these series are notable for the way their male hosts model consumption as production. Such a tactic can be seen to have been pioneered by Anthony Bourdain whose series *A Cook's Tour* (2002-2003, Food Network), Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations (2005-2012, Travel Channel) and Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown (2013-

present, CNN) essentially created the male traveller-eater role for modern television though emphasizing a global context rather than a US national one.[34]

The craving for authenticity and situatedness that we suggest unifies these texts can be better understood through recourse to anthropologist Marc Auge's theorization of the "non-place" – his designated term for contemporary generic sites including airports, superstores, and relentlessly chained and branded hotel and restaurants that thrive in the era of globalization but fail to meet the criteria for an actual place.[35] It is telling that the male figures in these texts devote themselves to establishing a sense of situatedness in "authentic" locales. Guy Fieri in Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives is particularly striking in this regard, given his proclivity for visiting non-chain restaurants that are often "off the beaten path" family businesses and and thus proving and re-proving the value of the local. Fear of being trapped in the contemporary non-place leads these men to have to re-authenticate their locales.

Each episode of Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives showcases Fieri as a roving endorser of small restaurants serving, as it is put in one episode, "homemade comfort foods" (the recipes showcased are generally indulgent, caloric and indifferent to health concerns). He profiles the owner and/or chef making a signature dish (with some perfunctory involvement by Fieri), gathers testimonials from loyal customers and sketches a picture of conviviality and community at the restaurant. The recipes are invariably personalized and perfected over time; they are presented as manifestations of dedicated, long-serving, personally committed restaurant cooks and the atmosphere in which they are served highlights familiarity and reliability for consumers. As Figures 3 and 4 illustrate, the show celebrates the authenticity of entrepreneurial cooks producing flavorful yet everyday food (here a signature sweet relish for hotdogs), Fieri an admiring observer and taster. [Insert Figures 3 and 4 here].

Adjacent modes of culinary reality television, while different to Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives in setting and style nevertheless maintain comparable investments in male expertise

and connosieruship. Cake Boss, for instance, while set in a family business in which culinary creativity is a collective endeavor depends heavily on the discernment of a male authority figure. Another related and long-running series which precedes Fieri's is Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern (Travel Channel, 2007--) although its internationalism marks it as significantly different to the emphatically US-centered texts we identify here. Meanwhile, the success of Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives is prompting more particularized variations of what has proved a durable formula: in August, 2015 The Food Network debuted two similar series featuring roving, consuming male hosts: Carnival Cravings and Beach Eats. Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives' status as a flagship series for its network is further suggested by the rollout of the similarly named and conceived *Burgers, Brew & 'Que* in July, 2015. New series adherent to the formula continue to proliferate as in the 2017 Food Network show Paul Hollywood City Bakes in which the eponymous UK celebrity chef travels the world visiting various bakeries.

A number of academics have sought to analyse the dynamics of gendered culinary performativity in recent popular culture. Lucy Scholes has noted "if we turn to today's TV celebrity chefs there is still a sharp distinction between how, where and what the women cook compared to their male counterparts."[36] Casey Ryan Kelly, writing about the uptick in cookbooks directed to men, argues that such texts suggest "that men prepare meals to adapt intergenerational masculinity to material advances in women's equality."[37] Cooking has functioned as a site for the reconsolidation of male authority and privilege for quite some time but there may be new post-recessionary parameters operating to structure recent depictions. In Kelly's view "Transparent in culinary culture, the present crisis in masculinity is a response to declines in upward mobility, the wane of so-called masculine industries, and fear of being supplanted as head of household."[38] Reality formats too engage with these discourses coupling masculinity with mastery of food.

What is most striking about Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives (or "Triple D" as it increasingly deems itself playing on the series' longevity and familiarity) is its profiling of small business owners who typically specialize in painstaking, artisanal approaches to the kinds of foods that are most often now mass produced. Such elements work to hold in place a nostalgia that these texts don't fully commit to but want to keep in play. This ambivalent, uncertain nostalgia is an element of other, earlier texts as well. Tanya Ann Kennedy, for example, notes of The Wire, that "This nostalgia for industrial capitalism hides the white racial frame that engineers social class and its meaning, using nostalgia for a specific type of iconic American masculinity to create the realist affect in that series."[39] In a study of American Chopper, the reality program in which a father and son run a business building custom motorcycles, Hamilton Carroll points out that "automotive television programs such as American Chopper situate the white male labouring body at the heart of a nostalgic construction of authentic citizenship."[40] Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives is not, of course, officially an automotive television show but it nevertheless adheres to this characterization in some respects. The more critical point for us is a sense that after the global recession it becomes harder to nostalgically render the white working class body; instead, an emphasis on entrepreneurialism and multi-platformed brand-building takes center stage.

It may be useful in this context to return to the trope of joyful labor introduced at the outset of this piece. Chef depicts a resistance against the bland institution of the restaurant which limits not just the hero's creativity, but his pleasure in labor. At his lowest point Carl takes pleasure in cooking, activities lovingly recorded by the camera. Such pleasure in work raises questions central to Richard Sennett's book The Craftsman in which he interrogates the cultivation of technique, the importance of learning through repetition and the problems posed by the structures in which labor takes place. His examples draw from diverse sites historically and culturally, encompassing medieval guilds, cookery, medicine and

musicianship. Across these sites Sennett observes: "At its higher reaches, technique is no longer a mechanical activity; people can feel fully and think deeply what they are doing once they do it well."[41] Such emotional involvement in a task performed to a high standard, the pleasure in the performance of technique is central to culinary entertainment and the version of manual work it articulates. For Sennett, "the emotional rewards craftsmanship holds out for attaining skill are twofold: people are anchored in tangible reality, and they can take pride in their work."[42] The celebration of small businesses evident in Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives centres on the possibility of taking pride in one's work. For all the mobile camerawork, rapid editing and at times manic performance mode adopted by Fieri, episodes take care to showcase the craft of cooks as they prepare their signature dish. We see the demonstration of technique acquired over time. Not only that, we see Fieri's delight in and admiration of the labor involved which is echoed by the customers whose enthusiastic consumption is a key part of the show. Business owners describe their ambitions and the origin of their recipes in contexts in which their profound sense of pleasure in the food they create is abundantly evident. In this way, Fieri's mobility—his travels in the Camaro—opens up for viewers a spectacle of culinary expertise which is figured as local and as authentic (and, to this extent, as immobile). Fieri, whose birth-name was Guy Ferry, reverted in his professional life to the original surname of his Italian ancestors. That Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives so frequently showcases ethnic cuisine inflects the encounters the series performs with a sense of recovery from the sterility of whiteness.

[Insert Figure 5 here] Although not food-related, The History Channel's popular series Amercan Pickers (2010--) is allied to the trends we discuss here in its articulation of America as a landscape to be traversed by entrepreneurs who mobilise arcane expertise as they seek out antique and collectible items. Pickers Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz engage in banter as they drive the backroads in their search for commodities of Americana such as

signs, toys and automotive items. Encountering a mix of eccentric characters and intriguing objects, the show engages in an evocation of national history through pop-culture that is almost exclusively white. As Eric Jenkins writes, "the pickers are portrayed as…consumer-producers who navigate open space."[43] Figure 5, taken from the series introduction, is accompanied by Mike Wolfe speaking of the people they meet on their travels as a "breed all their own". Such imagery highlights the series quasi-anthropological interest in the regions of America, a terrain of potential bargains inhabited by eccentric individuals who themselves function as instances of Americana. Mike and Frank's travels are both educational in line with the History Channel location of the series ("We make a living telling the history of America one piece at a time", Wolfe intones) and entrepreneurial (a repeated thread on forums is the extent to which the pair can be seen as exploiting vulnerable sellers who do not realise the value of the items exchanged). The theme of salvage has proved durable whether on land or at sea and across iterations including Abandoned (2012-), the NatGeo series in which a team of three men scavenge abandoned buildings throughout the US and Salvage Code Red (Nat Geo) focusing on two rival marine salvage companies. This robust category of reality programming invariably centralizes male journeying and the monetizability both of the material culture of Americana and items like copper that once featured as routine elements in construction protocols. With one striking exception, Lifetime's short-lived Picker Sisters in 2011, this category of television material is consistently and strikingly male-centered. As with food entertainment, men are typically associated with the freedom of movement represented by the road, whereas women are most often framed within interior or domestic settings. Thus the sole female figure in American Pickers, Danielle, is seen in the store, providing 'leads' to the 'boys' over the phone.

The texts we analyse here are unified in their commitment to staging (in whole or in part) homosocial enclaves of the kind that, as Amanda Lotz has noted, tended to decline in

American television in the 1980s and 1990s.[44] Such texts, we argue, operate under a new postfeminist permission to re-centralize male groups and dyads. The male-centered reality culinary franchises we discuss here are also notable for the need to manage male mid-life anger which they achieve by sublimating it into a re-consolidation of cool. (The signifiers of masculine "cool" in the texts we discuss include dark-rimmed glasses, bowling shirts, bandannas, tattooed arms and Guy Fieri's vintage Camaro). These texts, we maintain, amount to narratives about the afterlife of the hipster, inquiring into his post-peak social and economic positioning. Specifically they ask how he manages the entrepreneurial and self-branding imperatives of the neoliberal economy. Chef's Carl Casper shares with tv host Guy Fieri the habit of appropriating cool from the ethnic individuals and establishments he engages with. Like Fieri, he seeks to reconcile mobility, autonomy and a performance of expertise that would traditionally be considered "domestic." In this respect both characters are also comparable to another male reality star, Jackson Galaxy, who hosts *Animal Planet's* My Cat From Hell appearing as a consultant on cat behaviour visiting domestic sites to offer advice.

Notably, the hipster positions himself as unifying entrepreneurial inclinations with aspects of the idiosyncrasy of the slacker. These aging hipsters may indeed be former slackers reconciling themselves to the economic imperatives of the market at midlife. Male-fronted expertise shows like these are implicitly about men at home after a global recession that has been imagined as taking a particular toll on male breadwinners. In their creative DNA is worry about the un or underemployed white man whose public value is uncertain and as compensation for this newly anxious positioning his domestic value must be fortified.[45] Above all the hipster is a race poser; his relationship to US racial, ethnic and regional cultures an appropriative one. This pattern of appropriation, whereby white masculinity is reinvigorated via multiple encounters with the racial and ethnic diversity of US culture,

underlines the contradictory processes whereby post-racial culture both insistently installs race as constitutive of American identity while side-stepping/overlooking continuing racial inequalities. Such appropriation is analyzed by bell hooks through a metaphor of consumption; in her famous essay "Eating the Other" hooks characterizes the "commodification of difference" as stripping away the context and specificity of African American experience, an assertion of power that silences the Other.[46]

Media texts centred on men in culinary contexts who restore their prowess and master mobility by deploying the signifiers of hipsterism have significant precursors for this practice such as Jamie Oliver's 2005 *Jamie's Italian Escape* in which the celebrity chef toured Italy in a Volkswagen van.[47] We see the midlife hipster as a particular figure of resolution for some of the identity dilemmas associated with a postracial, postfeminist moment. Nostalgic in some respects he nevertheless is able to move forward; bypassing the stasis in which inequality fixes the poor, white American masculinity is seen to overcome crisis via mobile entrepreneurialism.

In Chef Carl's hipsterism is both sartorial and cultural in the sense that he demonstrates proximity to and appreciation of Latino food and music. Further, Carl's initial capitulation to and subsequent rejection of a position of subservient conformity is key to the film's narrative of re-masculinization. Indeed following his confrontation with the restaurant owner who employs him and the food critic who ridicules him, Carl is portrayed as effectively choosing to leave his employment rather than compromise his culinary talents. Inez's ex-husband Marvin (played in an over-the-top style by Robert Downey Jr.) is a parodic figure suggesting the sterility and pretentiousness of corporate culture (Carl is compelled to wear blue booties at Marvin's office to avoid tracking in dirt and is offered coconut water). Marvin gloats that he has had sex with Inez since the latter's divorce from Carl and patronizes him as a man who has "lost everything" but must see that he is "not a loser."

Crucially, it is a dispensation from Marvin that makes the food truck available to Carl as he grandly offers, "a white-on-white 88 Chevy Grumman foodtruck. It's a blank canvas for your dreams." When Carl calls his buddy to report, "I got a food truck," his acquisition is immediately symbolically Latinized by Martin's reply, "You got a taco truck?" A renovation montage is accompanied by salsa music and the truck is transformed from a shabby relic to a sleek vehicle with "El Jefe" (The Chief) inscribed across its hood. As Figure 6 illustrates this sequence is also represented as a family endeavor, Carl's son Percy working (albeit unwillingly at this stage) alongside him. Nostalgia whether for productive labor, the fantasy of taking to the road or encounters with nature represents an impulse that carries race with it; the trope of the man who strives against alienated labor and looks back to a time of economic plenitude and social power is an inherently racialized one which is premised on forgetting. The form of culinary expertise achieved by Carl Casper in Chef is one that also evades blackness in favor of a version of "spice" for which Latino/a culture stands.[48] [Insert Figure 6 here]

Mobility is a term that operates both socially and geographically within US culture. Social mobility evokes the fantasy of betterment. Geographical mobility is evoked via the road movie/motifs of travel. Chef embraces both of these dimensions and indeed works to explore the various ways in which the two operate in a mutually enforcing manner. The protagonist's stasis and lack of career advancement is expressed in two key ways via his culinary conservatism. Firstly, Riva insists on his right as proprietor to determine the menu thus limiting his chef's legitimate creative and career aspirations. Secondly, Carl is geographically stuck in Los Angeles while his emotional/romantic life is shown to be likewise arrested. The road trip is reinvigorating for the character's culinary practice, his career, his position as father and indeed as husband since the result is reunion with his glamorous and successful ex-wife. The vagueness of Inez's evidently lucrative profession

contrasts with the insistent materiality of Carl's labors. Nonetheless Inez's evident ability to flourish in a capitalist economy underpins Carl's revivification. She symbolizes his ability to access and exploit Latino cultural capital. Carl's loving preparation of food and his engagement with regional/ethnic American cuisine evokes discourses of authenticity in life and labor in marked contrast to an American food/work culture which, as Lauren Berlant describes, is framed by alienation and unhealth.[49] In turn, that contradiction between healthy autonomy on one hand and food excess on the other structures Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives with its celebration of oversized and calorific dishes.

Conclusion Tellingly while television chefs like Gordon Ramsey and Marco Pierre White have embodied a brutal, aggressive cross-platform masculinity, Carl's cooking in Chef effects a remasculinization which allows a reconstitution of the family with an emphasis on caring fatherhood. In this way his depiction chimes with broader tendencies in postfeminist representation for as Hannah Hamad has persuasively shown, fatherhood is a key credential of postfeminist masculinity across numerous representational fields and sites.[50] And as Yvonne Tasker asserts the contemporary environment is replete with film families "secured by fathers who learn to keep their word."[51] Carl's off-hand commitment to take Percy to New Orleans, made early in the film and by implication one of many unkept promises of time to be spent together, is ultimately fulfilled as part of their entrepreneurial road trip.

Focusing on a set of media texts that reference but ultimately repress gender and race flashpoints, this article represents a preliminary inquiry into the compatibility of coinciding crises of postfeminism and postrace. The importance of this conjunction has been identified by Jo Littler who writes of the "obvious semantic synchronicity and conceptual 'family resemblance' between the analytical categories of post-feminism and post-race, although this family resemblance is surpisingly under-discussed."[52] We have been interested to assess the

ways that a strategic conflation of consumption and production that has been more typically urged upon women in post-recession postfeminism is now being undertaken by white men.

These texts mobilize the residual narrative energies of the classical road movie in their efforts to consolidate and display white male identity capital. What becomes clear over the course of Carl Casper's restorative journey in Chef is that he must hone his skills in producing and consuming ethnicity through food, music and style. Getting this right enables him not only to master neoliberal capitalism but to regain an untroubled ideological status in a multi-racial world. Furthermore, it is highly important that Carl effects a rapprochement with social media regimes; effectively he learns that in the new digital culture "we are all public figures now."[53] Personalization, entrepreneurialism and mobility register as keynotes in these texts working to serve a fantasy of individual white male transcendence from the alienating regimes of contemporary work. While Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives does not share the narrative of family reconstruction which organizes a film such as Chef, the celebration of diverse American food cultures via Fieri's enthusiastic mobility presents a model of work as a space of intense engagement; the cooks we encounter seem to be not only "dedicated to good work for its own sake", but also committed to the communities in which their businesses operate.[54] The coupling of travel and food suggests a mastery of machinery that speaks to ideas of autonomy and self-determination.

The idealizations of white working-class masculinity increasingly taking place by way of reality television speak to the form's preoccupation with an authentic masculinity, one best accessed unalloyed and unmediated. Complying with Richard Dyer's notion of whiteness as (male) enterprise, they betray nostalgia for a fictional America associated with a frontier mythos and the singular masculinity—independent, competent, uncomplaining—popularly associated with it.[55] The texts we have examined here are unified by their centralization of a white man who is an appreciative consumer (sometimes also a producer) of ethnicity.

Critically the narratives of films like Chef and the episodic commitments of series like Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives operate as fortifications of enterprise culture and pose no challenge to an economic system that is broadly pulling back from any sense of investment in the commons. These men find a means of personally monetizing an often ethnicized authenticity and the process, Chef suggests, is spiritually beneficial, a route toward a broader sense of replenishment. Here it may be worth re-emphasizing the cultural dimensions of our emphasis on food cultures against a backdrop of inequality**.** In a context of privation and scarcity, as well as obesity and unhealth, food film and televison focuses not just on what is necessary to survive, but on meaningful consumption. The loving preparation of food evokes tradition and plenty, its shared consumption evokes companionship and conviviality. Culinary entertainment forms, then, take their place within a national culture in which promises of abundance sit uneasily alongside the accelerating precariousness of the white middle classes.

Rhetorics of white male loss have appeared in media culture recurrently since the advent of the Great Recession. Although news features certainly mentioned the impact of recession on African-American men, the threat of losing whiteness haunts "End of Men" rhetoric, feeding the narratives of restoration and reassurance considered here. As multiple instances of state violence point to the fraught character of black men's mobility, such popular texts about entrepreneurial journeys yoke together mobility and whiteness in scenarios of folksy optimism. The ability to sample diverse ethnoracial cultures seemingly built into culinary narratives drives a media culture that both commodifies difference and overlooks inequality enabling postrace discourse to reassure white men (and women) that little has changed in the hierarchies of American life.

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[1] Catherine R. Squires, The Post-Racial Mystique: Media & Race in the Twenty-First Century (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 201.

[2] Hamilton Carroll, Affirmative Reaction: New Formations of White Masculinity (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 2.

[3] We note that "the financial crisis promulgates cultural themes of male infantilism and underdevelopment, circulates tropes of male injury in which white men are positioned as both sign and symptom of economic contraction and generates a strange sort of "zero sum" thinking when it comes to the experiences of men and women in recession (i.e. if women are gaining, men must be losing)." Diane Negra and Yvonne Tasker, Gendering the Recession: Media and Culture in an Age of Austerity (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 8-9.

[4] "Rising Morbidity and Mortality in Midlife Among White Non-Hispanic Americans in the 21st Century," Proceedings of the National Academic of Science in the United States of America 112(49) 2015, 15078.

[5] Joel Achenbach & Dan Keating, "New Research Identifies a 'Sea of Despair' Among White, Working Class Americans." The Washington Post March 23, 2017.

[6] Emily Badger, "What Happened to the American Boomtown?" The New York Times December 6, 2017

[7] "Overnight in Walmart Parking Lots: Silence, Solace and Refuge." The New York Times November 14, 2017.

[8] Tanya Ann Kennedy, Historicizing Post-Discourses: Postfeminism and Postracialism in United States Culture (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017), 14.

[9] Hannah Rosin, The End of Men: And the Rise of Women (New York: Viking, 2012) 94.

[10] Roopali Mukherjee, "Rhyme and Reason: 'Post-Race' and the Politics of Colorblind Racism," In The Colorblind Screen: Television in Post-Racial America, Eds. Sarah Nilsen & Sarah E. Turner (New York: New York University Press, 2014) 51.

[11] Mukherjee, Post-Racial Mystique, 6.

[12] Hochschild, Arlie Russell. Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right. New York: New Press, 2016. Isenberg, Nancy. White Trash: The 400-Year History of Class in America. New York: Penguin, 2017. Vance, J.D. Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis. New York: Harper, 2016. Williams, Joan C. White Working Class: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America. Cambridge: Harvard Business Review Press, 2017.

[13] Justin Gest, The New Minority: White Working Class Politics in an Age of Immigration and Inequality (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) 10.

[14] Notably, the foodtruck as a potent symbol of adaptive, resourceful and mobile commerce has been deployed in cinema before: its use in restorative maneuvers around masculinity also features in The Five-Year Engagement (2012), a film that covers similar terrain to Chef.

[15] Donna Peberdy, Masculinity and Film Performance: Male Angst in Contemporary American Cinema (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011) 7.

[16] Carroll, Affirmative Reaction, 6.

[17] Brenda R. Weber among others has recognized how the popular culture of male juvenility concentrates comedically in cinema around a particular set of powerful male stars. The industrial clout of this model of comedy is matched by its commitment to elements such as journeying and homosociality which feature in some of the biggest hits of this category including *There's Something About Mary* (1998) and The Hangover franchise (2009, 2011, 2013). See Weber's "Puerile Pillars of the Frat Pack: Jack Black, Will Ferrell, Adam Sandler

and Ben Stiller," In Shining in Shadows: Movie Stars of the 2000s. Ed. Murray Pomerance (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

[18] For a fuller discussion of these films see Suzanne Leonard, "Escaping the Recession?: The New Vitality of the Woman Worker" in Gendering the Recession: Media and Culture in an Age of Austerity. Eds. Diane Negra & Yvonne Tasker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014). In Leonard's account they factor within a popular culture landscape of "recessionary discourses that have tended to encourage hostility between the sexes by creating the mythology that in a new economic order, motivation and opportunity are both equally apportioned in favor of women." (54).

[19] Here the "wrong woman" for Carl and potential impediment to the film's desired reconciliation between Carl and Inez is white, Scarlett Johansson's restaurant hostess Molly.

[20] Isabel Molina-Guzman, "'Latina Wisdom' in 'Postrace' Recession Media" in Gendering the Recession: Media and Culture in an Age of Austerity Eds. Diane Negra & Yvonne Tasker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014) 79

[21] Mary Beltran, "Fast and Bilingual: Fast and Furious and the Latinization of 'Racelessness,'" Cinema Journal 53(1) (Fall, 2013) 75-96.

[22] Steven Cohan & Ina Rae Hark, "Introduction," In The Road Movie Book, Eds. Steven Cohan & Ina Rae Hark (London & New York: Routledge, 1997) 2.

[23] Jonathan Leer & Katrine Medgarrd Kjaer,"Strange Culinary Encounters: Stranger Fetishism in *Jamie's Italian Escape* and *Gordon's Great Escape*," Food, Culture & Society 18(2) (June, 2015) 313.

[24] The mystery of Inez's line of work has preoccupied Internet Movie Database posters, for whom it seems important if for unspecified reasons. Two separate strands of discussion on the film's message boards take up the subject.

[25] Jacob Silverman, Terms of Service: Social Media and the Price of Constant Connection (New York: Harper Collins, 2015) 22.

[26] See Jane Feuer, "'Quality' Reality and the Bravo Media Reality Series," Camera Obscura 30(1) (2015) 185-195.

[27] "On the Death of Sandra Bland and Our Vulnerable Bodies" http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/25/opinion/on-the-death-of-sandra-bland-and-our-vulnerable-bodies.html?_r=1

[28] As part of the promotion of the film, Favreau and the film's food consultant served Cubano sandwiches on a pop-up basis at established restaurants and spoke of putting the film's foodtruck into service. See Bryan Alexander,"Jon Favreau's 'Chef' Food Truck Rolls On," USA Today July 17, 2014.

[29] June Deery, "Mapping Commercialization in Reality Television," In A Companion to Reality Television, Ed. Laurie Ouellette, (Methuen: Wiley Blackwell, 2014) 26.

[30] A partial list of such series would include Ax Men, Deadliest Catch, Ice Road Truckers, Coal, Wicked Tuna, Duck Dynasty and Gold Rush Alaska (later just Gold Rush).

[31] Christopher Lockett, "Masculinity and Authenticity: Reality TV's Real Men," Flow October 15, 2015.

[32] Diane Negra, "Gender Bifurcation in the Recession Economy: Extreme Couponing and Gold Rush Alaska," Cinema Journal 53(1) (2013) In Focus, 124-131.

[33] For the second season the title was changed to Secret Eats with Adam Richman, suggesting perhaps the problems of the gendered designation of the series.

[34] Also notable in this regard was Mario Batali's Molto Mario (Food Network, 1996-2004) which featured the chef, restaurant owner and television personality showcasing local foods in Italy. Batali's persona, with its emphasis on culinary joyfulness and ease, has been

consistent in many ways with the film and television chefs discussed elsewhere here but that persona was abruptly punctured in December, 2017 by allegations of sexual misconduct that led to Batali being fired by datetime food show The Chew (ABC).

[35] See Marc Auge, Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity 2nd Ed. (London: Verso, 2009).

[36] Lucy Scholes, "A Slave to the Stove?: The TV Celebrity Abandons the Kitchen: Lifestyle TV, Domesticity and Gender," Critical Quarterly 53(3) (October, 2011), 48.

[37] Casey Ryan Kelley, "Cooking Without Women: The Rhetoric of the New Culinary Male," Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies 12(2) (June, 2015) 201.

[38] Kelly, "Cooking Without Women," 202.

[39] Kennedy, Historicizing Post-Discourses, 79.

[40] Carroll, Affirmative Reaction, 99.

[41] Richard Sennett, The Craftsman (London: Penguin, 2008) 20.

[42] Sennett, The Craftsman, 21.

[43] Eric Jenkins, "The Affections of the American Pickers: Commodity Fetishism in Control Society," Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies 12(4) (December 2015) 350.

[44] Amanda D. Lotz, Cable Guys: Television and Masculinities in the 21st Century (New York: New York University Press, 2014) 124.

[45] For a fuller discussion of masculinity and My Cat from Hell see Diane Negra, "Animality, Domesticity and Masculinity in My Cat from Hell," Critical Studies in Television. 13(1) (March 2018) 6-23.

[46] bell hooks, Black Looks: Race and Representation (Boston MA: South End Press, 1992) 30.

[47] Discussing the series, Jonatan Leer and Katrine Meldgaard Kjaer observe, "Jamie is clearly playing on the van's legacy as a hippie lifestyling accessory, but where it often was a space for social gathering and collective excursions in the hippie era, in Escape, the van functions much more as a private space for self-discovery." "Strange Culinary Encounters," (316).

[48] One brief exception to this is when Carl, Martin and Percy sing along to a version of Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing" as they travel from New Orleans to Austin, a rare evocation of African-American music making although it should be noted that the arrangement here is such that it is rendered a hybrid form. Specifically the version features the emphatically New Orleans musical style of the Hot 8 Brass Band. hooks' evocation of white culture's raiding of ethnic cultural practices as a search for 'spice' is also relevant here.

[49] Lauren Berlant has analyzed a "slow death" attendant on changing patterns of employment and consumption, noting the classed and raced dimensions of obesity which is figured within media culture as a "spectre of downward mobility for most of the U.S. working population." Cruel Optimism (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011) 112.

[50] See Hannah Hamad, Postfeminism and Paternity in Contemporary U.S. Film: Framing Fatherhood (London: Routledge, 2013).

[51] Yvonne Tasker, "Practically Perfect People: Postfeminism, Masculinity and Male Parenting in Contemporary Cinema," in A Family Affair: Cinema Calls Home Ed. Murray Pomerance (London: Wallflower Press, 2008), 183

[52] Jo Littler, Against Meritocracy: Culture, Power and Myths of Mobility. (London: Routledge, 2017) 65.

[53] Silverman, Terms of Service, iv.

[54] Sennett, The Craftsman, 20

[55] Richard Dyer, White: Essays on Race and Culture (London: Routledge, 1997).